



CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS

Date: October 31, 2017

To: The Honorable Representative Triston Cole, Chairman, and
Honorable Members of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee

From: Karyn Ferrick, Legislative Affairs Manager *KF*

Re: Support for HB 4265

The City of Grand Rapids, Michigan is proud to be the first community in the state to adopt a safe passing ordinance which requires a five (5) foot clearance when overtaking or passing a bicyclist. This ordinance was one result of the Grand Rapids bicycle safety education project and campaign called "Driving Change" – see www.GRDrivingChange.org. Since 2010, the City of Grand Rapids has added over 80 miles of bike lanes and bike infrastructure to its roadway network. This rapid change to a long standing traditional roadway system was met with confusion and concern. Further emphasizing the need for an infrastructure and education project was the significantly higher rate of fatal and serious injuries for bicyclists in Grand Rapids (8.2%), than compared to the entire state of Michigan (2.8%).

To address this critical issue, the city of Grand Rapids, with the support of the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), launched a campaign to raise awareness of bicycle safety. The goal of this campaign is to reduce bicycle crashes by helping the people of Grand Rapids understand the new infrastructure and "rules of the road" that foster respect between motorists and bicycles and make us all safer.

The first year of the Driving Change campaign resulted in over 32 million impressions and a reduction in fatal and serious injuries for cyclists of 81% when compared to the same period the previous year. These are exceptional results, especially when vehicle fatalities are on the rise nationally (National Safety Council - <http://www.nsc.org/learn/NSC-Initiatives/Pages/Fatality-Estimates.aspx>).

The safe passing law, combined with the educational outreach, has made Grand Rapids a safer place for one of the most vulnerable road users, cyclists. Thank you for the committee's consideration of this important legislation.

